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Such is the story of this song full of Arabian melodies that are very simple at first when you listen to them but which you will in vain try to repeat. One clearly sees, though, the mad pursuit, the frothing horses (stolen horses, perhaps, but who cares), the strong odour of horses sweating and healthy human bodies, the stolen girl with scattered hair clinging close to the wildly galloping horseman-lover. . . .

They also sang "Pratozore" and "Staroverochka." The former is a song of incomparable beauty that sounds like

the old Greek hymns and the enticing tunes of the Russian national folk dance—a combination that thrills one's heart with an ancient bacchic joy; the second, a rare song of mournful intonation and with a diabolical chorus wherein distress is wonderfully intermingled with rakishness. Oh, the unforgettable night! I can still hear ringing in my ears their cries, yells and the fantastic and endless variations of simple but elusive melodies.—*Znanye, Petrograd*. [Translation, Lotus Magazine.]

EARLY IDEALS

BY BARONESS EVA VON DER ECK

LET your children have early ideals, and you will contribute to and insure their future happiness." It sounded very good, very scientific, very ethical, but going home from the afternoon lecture where I had just heard the quoted wisdom, I mused about the truth of the statement, and—I must confess—I had my doubts. Do early ideals really contribute to our future happiness? Looking back into my own past this pedagogic wisdom seemed rather dubious.

Early ideals are awakened by the first strong impressions we get out of life or out of artistic equivalents of life, and in my case these first strong impressions with the consequently following early ideals were given me through the first play I saw, the first opera I heard, and the first, or at least one of the first books I read. I had, thus, three distinct, clear, and emotionally well defined early ideals, but, on the whole, I do not think they have augmented what there may be on

happiness in my life. Pray, judge for yourself.

The first play I witnessed was *Le maître de forge*. The higher powers did not want to see this, even at that time, obsolete and over-sentimental play, and so the tickets were given to me and my governess. This lady, very wisely, demurred. "*Elle est trop jeune*," she explained to the authorities, but the authorities simply shrugged their shoulders and said: "*Elle ne comprendra rien*," and so we went. What the play is about, I can not tell now and I, probably, could not have clearly told then, but even now I feel somewhere in my heart the wonderful thrill and the almost giddy delight which I experienced when I saw Philippe kneel before Claire and exclaim in a passionate love-laden voice: "*Je t'adore*." At this moment an early ideal was set before me, the ideal of a magic and enchanted love. Every evening, when I closed my eyes, a prince of dreamland

seemed to stand at my bed and to whisper into my ear with the same inflections that had charmed me in Philippe's voice: *Je t'adore*. At dusk, when my book fell out of my hands, and when out of the mysterious shadows the face of future days seemed to smile, days full of promise, and wonder, and fulfillment, it was around Philippe's figure that all the promise clustered and crystallized, and the wonder was in his voice that sang to me the intoxicating message: *Je t'adore*. That was my early ideal of love and, believe me, reality was compared with these dreams always rather drab and unsatisfying. There were situations in my life not quite without charm; words were spoken which did not lack entirely warmth and ardor, but never, never did a love of mine kneel before me, and never, never was I told: "*Je t'adore*." Why I have been thus deprived and thwarted I do not know. Was it because none of my beaux was named Philippe and could boast to be a maître de forge, or did I lack the charms of the preposterous Claire? Really, I can not tell. The only thing I know is that my early ideal was not fulfilled by life, and that there has been until this day a little sting and a little resentment in my heart against all who ever had the opportunity to say those charmed words and who have left them unsaid.

The first opera I heard was "*Die Walküre*," that wonderwork that seems to be created out of fire and dew, that has the strange and windy beauty of swift and hurrying clouds and far-off thunders, and that almost overflows with the bitterness of things too sweet. When I heard Siegmund sing to his sister and bride the incomparable love- and spring-song of all times: "*Winterstürme welchen dem Wonnemond*," another early ideal was created for me, the ideal of May as

the climax of all seasons, of May as the *Wonnemond*, the *mois des délices*, and from this time on I did the whole year long in a certain sense nothing, but to wait and to long for May. And then, when after innumerable delays and almost heartbreaking long March- and April-days at last May drew near, do you think I really lived through days filled with the breath of Spring, the perfume of growing things, and translucent with the golden beauty of an open and smiling sky? Never, absolutely never. My days were ever and again cloudy, overcast, and chilly; more than once I lived even through a little snow-storm in May, and as far as rain is concerned there seemed the whole year round not half as much water to fall from heaven as in this one short month. Probably this is quite natural and according to the season and the climate, and without my early ideal I would have taken the rough and inclement May-weather complacently enough, and have simply waited for June; but as it was I felt myself always cheated, and every new May I was bitterly disappointed. Even to-day when May comes round, my heart yearns in vain for the perfect days which no earthly month can give me, and whenever I hear again "*Winterstürme welchen dem Wonnemond*," there is a pang as of a never healing wound in my heart, and the sadness of unfulfilled longings darkens my soul. No, surely, my early ideal has not made me happier.

The first book I read was a fairy-story telling the adventures of a chimney-sweep and of a scissors-grinder, and from the moment on I read this little book another early ideal, this time a vocational ideal, took hold of my heart. I decided now and then, and with a vigorous enthusiasm that belongs only to childhood, to become either a chimney-sweep

or a scissors-grinder and, if possible, both. If one comes to think of it my choice was not half bad. What can there be better in life than to climb high and to wander far; to climb through dust and darkness like a chimney-sweep, and to have then a most intimate and delightful glimpse of sky-blue over our head, or to wander over open roads and through the changing seasons, and sharpen everything that got dull in the drudgery of the workaday world. No, even to-day I hold that chimney-sweep and scissors-grinder have drawn a charming lot, and my early ideal stands and holds good as far as the ideal side goes. But I need hardly tell you that this ideal too was never realised. I could never follow the lure of the open road and wander a-gypsying through the world, and whenever there was dust and darkness in my life it was not the chimney-sweep's dust and darkness, mounting upwards and permitting at last a view of the eternal light of the heavens, but rather the darkness of a mole track, leading always deeper and deeper into lightless gloom. You may smile over this early ideal of mine, and I smile too, but, nevertheless, whenever I meet a scissors-grinder (I never see chimney-sweeps. Do they exist besides in fairy-tales?) I feel somehow that I have missed the best things in life, and that I shall never taste the fruit of true happiness and content.

Out of such experiences I come then to the conclusion that early ideals are not entirely desirable. It would, perhaps, be better to teach young souls to

live life less according to a program, but to accept rather what the day brings, and to have confidence in the Hours. This smiling, proud, and carefree confidence we have almost lost; we want to make sure of everything, we are afraid to give Fate a chance, and we tremble to accept what luck may fall to our lot. We want to insure our happiness and with other formulas we try the prescription of the Early Ideals. But there as well as in many other details of the metaphysical materia medica superstition plays a leading rôle, and our happiness may, in fact, be more hampered than heightened by early ideals. Better by far is it to follow the advice of the old Stoic Marcus Aurelius who counsels: "Willingly give thyself up to Clotho, allowing her to spin thy thread into whatever spinst she pleases." Yes, leave it to Dame Clotho. Don't come to her with early ideals and tell her about the pattern into which your life-thread shall be woven. She knows ever so much better. She has a comprehensive view of the whole thing and of the artistic fitness of every single detail, and, surely, she needs no advice. And after you have lived your life thus you will win something better than early ideals—late ideals may be yours. Not the Absolute, but the Ultimate will be your allotment, not backwards will you look and compare, but forward and experience, and in the truest sense of the word Adventure will be Life to you and Life an Adventure.—*Fischer's Rundschau, Munich.* [Translation, Lotus Magazine.]